Due to scheduling conflicts there was no rap session today. Pre-meeting discussion led by Executive Officer Robert McKinney began at 4:01 PM. Reporters from the *Vermilion* were in attendance.

Brief report from Carolyn Bruder, on two items:

(1) Percentages allocated for annual evaluations of faculty have been changed, such that the top three categories (I, II, and III*) are expanded. Whereas formerly 50% of faculty had to be ranked in Category III or below, now only 40% are. Assignations of categories from chairs are sometimes changed at the deans' levels and above, since the right percentage of the entire university must ultimately be fit into these categories. (Revised percentages have not yet been posted at the AFPD website at [http://apfd.louisiana.edu/resources/faculty-load/facultyWorkload.shtml](http://apfd.louisiana.edu/resources/faculty-load/facultyWorkload.shtml), but they are in use this year.)

(2) Antonio Moreira [http://www.umbc.edu/cbe/moreira/](http://www.umbc.edu/cbe/moreira/) is the current favorite for the Provost position, but the search is still ongoing.

The regular meeting was called to order at 4:05 PM, with 30 Senators signing the roster.

Judy Gentry moved to approve the minutes of the February meeting; the question was called and minutes were approved unanimously.

Executive Officer Robert McKinney pointed out that we need rules for discussion, to make sure everyone's voice is heard. We should make sure not to speak out of turn, waiting to be recognized. Should we consider making rules about the amount of time taken by speakers, or about the number of times each person speaks to an issue?
Gentry moved we agree not to speak without being recognized by the EO, and was seconded by George Wooddell. The question was called and the motion was passed with one nay, no abstentions.

Ray Jindal moved we do allow people to speak to points of order without recognition, and was seconded by Leslie Bary. The question was called and the motion was passed unanimously.

Executive Report and Discussion:

McKinney spoke to the issue of accessibility of the meeting room for disabled Senators. A more accessible room is not available, but parking can be arranged for those who need it; people should contact him for this.

McKinney: on bills in Legislature we may want to watch. There are 48 bills on the list the Legislature has sent out and that he has distributed to us. 34 of these address retirement. More deal with facilities, three with higher education, and others, boards and commissions. The situation regarding retirement, insurance, and higher education generally is complex and confusing. McKinney will continue to issue summaries of key bills, and to send out lists of relevant newspaper articles.

Gentry: to what extent does the state constitution protect the retirement system? We have assumed that it did, but it may not entirely; can the University get our legal advisers to investigate?

McKinney: the Legislature is discussing this issue as well.

Barbara Ciccardo: those who entered the state retirement system at a time when there were no other choices may have grounds for suit if it is changed or cancelled.
McKinney: Vice President for Research Twilley and the new administrator on innovation will be at the April 18 rap session. Suggestions of other people to invite to rap sessions in AY 2012-2013 are invited.

**Reports of Senate Committees:**

Committee on Committees – no report
Ways and Means – Linton – report will go into minutes [insert]
Academic planning and development – Ward – no report
Governmental concerns – Turner – is working
Faculty advisory council – Deaton – there was an ALFS meeting March 17; McKinney will contact Deaton for a report
Ad hoc committee on instructor rank – their charge is completed, and the document is ready for publication; the committee will then be dissolved
Status of women – Gentry/Wooddell -- no report
Status of Black faculty – no report

**Reports of University Committees:**

Curriculum -- Reidel – 55 new courses have approved, May 14 is the final date for approval of courses for the 2013-15 catalogue, so now is the time to submit proposals for any new courses
Faculty Grievance – On the motion approved last month, to increase the number of members on this committee from 8 to 9, the committee on Ways and Means discussed implementation with Carolyn Bruder. Her suggestion was that each college have a member and an alternate. **Keith Dorwick moved, with seconds from Jindal and Woodell** to refer the issue of composition to Ways and Means, to see whether the language of the Senate constitution must be changed to accommodate Bruder's suggestion. The question was called and the motion **passed with one nay.**
Faculty benefits and welfare -- no report.
Other committees -- no reports.
Unfinished business.

McKinney: the Senate passed a motion at last meeting to create an Executive Committee, which would include the immediate past EO; in the event the immediate past EO is unavailable, a member is to be elected at large. Does John Meriwether, the immediate past EO, accept membership? He does not. The Committee on Committees must therefore be asked to conduct election for member at large. **Dorwick so moves; Woodell seconds**; the question is called and the **motion is passed unanimously**.

Jindal: he had asked whether we can get information on the status of graduate applications. He would like to have access to this information in real time so as to be able to communicate with applicants to recruit. At present, one must request the graduate coordinator to request this information from the Graduate School; this takes time and competitive candidates are lost. McKinney will follow up on this with the Graduate School.

Gentry: on the letter to candidates for faculty positions about drug testing, credit checks and background checks. This letter has gone out to strong candidates we would like to hire and their records are in the process of being vetted. The Committee on Ways and Means is working on a response to the situation, but we should perhaps request form Administration that the letter sent applicants for faculty positions be different from that of non professional people.

cKinney: the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Benefits is looking into this.

Woodell: that committee is looking into the substance of the matter, i.e. whether it is legal etc., but we should still discuss the question of form, e.g. the language in the letter that goes to faculty.

Bary: can we see the actual letter?

Bruder: it is on the HR website.
Bary has looked at the HR website at http://personnel.louisiana.edu/, and sees information about the policy both under "forms" and under "policies," but does not see the actual text of the letter; requests direction.

**New Business:**

McKinney: It was reported in the Vermilion that the Senate approved some recommendations about changes to policies on drop/add and withdrawal made by the Committee on Academic Affairs and Standards that Dean Clark discussed with the SGA. We have actually not discussed these, and we should. They are as follows:

1) Extend the drop/add period at the beginning of each semester from 4 days to 5.
2) Limit first year students to 17 hours per semester. Exceptions to be allowed students with high ACT scores or with letters from their deans.
3) Place students who do not complete English 101 and Math 100/105 in their first 3 semesters on academic suspension.
4) At present, students are allowed to drop 3 courses with a W in their first 2 years without penalty, and 1 each in their junior and senior years. The penalty for each additional W grade is $50. It is proposed to increase this to $70 per credit hour. This will make up the cost in funding to the University of these grades.

Discussion of proposal (1): the time period should be extended further. At present, classes which meet only once a week have not necessarily met before the drop/add period ends. This period should be extended such that students can meet each class once before making the decision to drop/add courses.

Discussion of proposal (2): this is acceptable.

Discussion of proposal (3): suspension is problematic since it is tantamount to dismissal. Students cannot complete these courses under suspension, nor are they likely to be admitted
to other institutions to complete them. A registration hold, such that they are obliged to register for these courses, is a better idea.

Discussion of proposal (4), by several people, points made included the following: $210 per 3 credit course is a lot of money. On the other hand withdrawals do cost the University that much, and our budget situation is grim. Furthermore, we want to able to offer places in courses to students who do not plan to withdraw. At the same time, we do not want to discourage students from attempting challenging courses or work in disciplines new to them. Better advising is needed to avoid situations in which students decide or see themselves obliged to take W grades, and a process is needed to remove W grades which are assigned by administrative mistake. We may also want to institute a limited pass/fail option, so that students who might do passable, if not excellent work do not feel obliged to take a W.

Gentry moved we ask the EO to create an ad hoc committee to study this matter and present their findings at the April meeting, and was seconded by Jindal. Reidel, Ciccardo, and Bary volunteered to serve. The question was called and the motion passed unanimously.

Meriwether: could McKinney to contact the Vermilion to correct error? McKinney: yes.

There was a motion to adjourn, with several seconds, which was passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 PM.